1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

A Village Baptism

One ceremony which has deep meaning for the family members is the baptism of a recently arrived infant. First of all comes the selection of godparents, although this is usually determined by the custom of having those who were sponsors at the wedding also be godparents of the children which issue from that marriage. But if many children have come subsequently it is only fitting that the honor be given to someone else. The father is free to invite some notable, say a political figure from the area, to serve as godfather, an opportunity which few politicians pass up. On the other hand, if the couple is dissatisfied with the godparent who would normally be invited, it may follow traditional procedures to select another. An inquiry into these takes one deeply into folklore and belief in magic. When childlessness, stillbirth, or infant mortality is blamed upon the godparent, villagers assume that a new godparent might lead to better success. According to Chrysoula, the wise woman of Spetsai, her sister bore a child who died within twenty-four hours after birth, and later on she had a pseudo-pregnancy. In her desperation she prayed to the Virgin: "Please give me a child of either sex. If it is a girl I'll give her your name; if it is a boy I'll dedicate it to you but will have to give it the name of its paternal grandparent." This was on the morning of March 25 (Evangelismos Day); that afternoon she had intercourse with her husband and on Christmas Day a little girl was born. As soon as she was able, the mother picked up the baby, put the baby on the porch of the church dedicated to the Virgin, and waited to see who would discover the baby and, by so doing, be designated godparent. People standing around consider it lucky to be a godparent on such an occasion, and several may be inclined to volunteer. An especially eager person may throw a handkerchief ahead of a rival and thus stake out a claim. The mother watches from a distance. When the child has been taken into the church for the ceremony, she goes home to prepare sweets and other food for the baptismal feast.

The same procedure for gaining a new godparent as a replacement for the one who sponsored the wedding of the couple is followed in most parts of Greece but occurs only infrequently, since people reluctantly change their godparent ties. Once the godparents have been selected, the guests have to be invited — relatives and very close friends or, as was fortunate in my case, an interested foreigner who happens to be in the vicinity. The women of the household allow themselves a few days in advance to plan and prepare for the festive occasion. The church ceremony is a lively affair. If the child is baptized within forty days of birth, as it usually is, the mother does not attend, for she is still unclean. The principals in the ceremony are the priest, the infant, and the godparent, with the latter's responsibility supposedly extending to the spiritual oversight of the godchild, today a matter of

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

651 631 specialists think it undesirable to have over 90 percent of all taxes collected by the national government, as is done in Greece, even though much of it is channeled back through various services to the local communities. At the same time, they admit that there is great reluctance on the part of local authorities to take on the tax-collection function and that in those instances where they do collect local funds they do so inefficiently. Obviously, the golden mean has not yet been found in this delicate area of the relationship between local and central government.[13]

647 When the topic of conversation turns from the services to the officials who carry them out, local informants respond fast and furiously, much of the comment in disapproving tones. I have yet to find a description of Greek life, past or present, that deals very kindly with Greek officialdom. This might be said of many countries, but in Greece the lowly and even high-placed official is beset with so many difficulties that it is a wonder he functions at all. His first problem is the low standards traditionally expected 647 of the civil servant. Most Greeks think that it is perfectly proper procedure for them to bestow a favor upon some official so that he will give their case 662 preference, either in considering it before other cases or in recognizing certain extenuating circumstances in their favor. The law may or may not be abrogated and regular channels set aside, but the irregularities deal quite often with rearrangements and interpretations within the scope of the limits set by the law so that one person gets preferential treatment over others. When one comes face to face with the great number of papers that have to be signed to do even a simple transaction involving governmental authority, one realizes how great is the temptation to bribe or bring to bear some other consideration (such as working through the good graces of a relative of the official) to shorten the red tape and wind up the matter more quickly than usual. Not all officials would condone such measures, but they are subjected to much temptation.

647 A second problem, tied in with the first, is the low compensation which officials receive in the face of increased living costs. Since many government workers cannot live even modestly on their salaries, they take on other commitments. These part-time jobs cause them to slight their full-time government employment, for which supervision is frequently lax.

Insecurity in the job is a third difficulty for many of the higher officials. The ministries, which in countries like France are run by highly skilled civil servants no matter how many cabinet ministers come and go, are staffed in Greece by people, many quite capable, who are apt to be swept out of office when a new minister comes in. Many, because of sheer competence and skillful legerdemain, manage to survive from one change of ministers to the next, but are never sure that they will weather the next changeover. In some ministries there have been as many as forty different ministers in six years.

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

answer than that the farmers were incited by the Rally Party. As if there were any need of incitement in their case. One does not need incitement when one is hungry and sentenced to despair.[18]

The year does not matter, the name of the party does not matter, for in Greece a political, if not a social, gulf between the village and the city remains. Since 1952, as a later chapter will show, much has been done through the Agricultural Extension Service and other programs to better the condition of the peasantry. The success of such programs inevitably depends upon the skills and attitudes of those trying to carry them out in the name of the central government, but even more depends on the stability and continuity of the central government so that measures which are under way are not canceled and other political adventures substituted instead.

A peasant or a village president has three ways of straightening out some grievance involving the national government. First, he and his fellows can resort to strikes, demonstrations, and — in the case of the guerrilla war — to the support of those who would change the situation by revolution. Second, he can work through the regular administrative or executive channels already described. Through his local president and through the nomarch, many affairs can be carried to those in a position to settle the grievance, or in some cases he may take the time and trouble himself to go to some responsible official in the appropriate ministry for help. In other words, he is trying to find his way through the administrative apparatus of government and to use it to accomplish some objective. A third approach is to work through the political or legislative rather than the administrative channel. This means going to the representative from his district who serves in the national unicameral legislature in an effort to persuade him to intercede with the proper administrative officials. It might also mean going to some political leader, a former minister perhaps, to see if he can use his good graces in the matter.

Enough has been said thus far about Greek officialdom to show some of the difficulties that a villager, as an individual or as a community president, would face in making use of the administrative channels. Are the political outlets any more promising?

I once asked a peasant about a solidly constructed bridge we were then crossing. He said that it was obtained because one of their local people had been a member of parliament and had arranged to have this built. I wondered how long it would be before they had another member of parliament and thereby received some other needed project. And a mayor of one of the Thracian towns confided that he preferred the politically appointed nomarch to the career nomarch because one could go to the members of parliament and have them get an inefficient politically appointed nomarch

1:Sanders Z-5,8 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

662 replaced. Indications such as these showed the importance of the legislature in keeping the administrative apparatus in check, but did not provide any 664 guidelines as to how this might best be done.

665 But this approach has its negative overtones as well. Over and over again I was told that such-and-such a thing was impossible for the village because 662 it had not voted in support of the party in power. This was one of the points cited by a prosperous Greek merchant, who travels much throughout the country, when he listed changes he considered necessary in the rural parts of the country:

1. Smaller interest rates so there will be greater ease in handling money.
2. Less red tape so that the peasant when he comes to borrow money for a drill doesn't spend more money waiting than he spends for the pump.
3. State employees must understand that they are in the service of the people, especially the peasants, and not expect to be bribed to get a job done.
4. Greater justice so that the gendarme and judge are not primarily interested in a person's party affiliation but will carry out justice.

In other words, party affiliation may influence the administration of justice. From another point of view, working through a member of parliament is really the peasant's way of trying to get around a law. To do this is considered a great accomplishment, for he thinks that rules are made to be broken and evaded. This is because the rules have been made by others whose criteria for developing them are different from his own. For him, individual criteria are more important than rules others have made.

662 I had an impression, gained from hundreds of conversations with peasants throughout Greece, that the peasant prefers the political to the administrative approach. At first, the explanation was hard to find because it was obvious everywhere that the government agencies, though inefficient at times, were helping him reconstruct his destroyed home, assisting him in the purchase of agricultural equipment, teaching his wife and daughters how to can tomatoes and cook fish, and bringing more water to his parched fields. The reason became apparent, however, when I remembered that the 571 Greek peasant is more interested in personal relationships than he is in 662 things or in concrete achievements. He complains if he does not have things, especially if those in other villages are getting them, but does not value them in their own right. They are a measure of how his personal relationships are working out. He honestly feels that he can deal with the politicians sent up from his district to parliament and continues to share this optimistic frame of mind no matter how many times he has been disappointed in the past. Of course, he is content to work through the government official if he can personalize that relationship, to his own advantage, and not be treated as an anonymous citizen who must be dealt with impartially in keeping with the rules. He would rather be dealt with as a person

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

and receive fewer material rewards than to be dealt with impersonally and receive more material goods. Efficiency, then, whether in administration or in farm work, is something he does not initially value; he must be taught to value it if it is to assume any importance in his life.

As many observers have pointed out, the Greek — be he peasant or city dweller — is not loyal to an abstract political principle, nor is he loyal to a political organization as such.[16] He is loyal to a political leader but only so long as following that leader does not mean that he must become disloyal to himself and go against his own cherished opinions of what ought to be done. Therefore, he can switch from one political leader to another without any sense of betrayal and sees no inconsistency in contradictory political behavior because he does not behave by the principles by which contradictions are gauged. Each situation is a separate case to be judged by itself and precedents have little relevance.

The peasant, sitting in his smoke-filled coffeehouse, is interested in hearing what others say about politics in Athens, not because he feels very closely identified with one party or the other, but because he tries to figure out what the meaning of each event is for his own particular existence. Few villagers are truly partisan in their political allegiance, which explains why it is almost impossible to maintain even a semblance of a party organization in a village. The parties do not even try. When elections are coming up, the candidates know the names of local people who have been sympathetic in the past and, through their help, try to work up a little political rally at which they can state why they should be supported for office. Around election time I chanced to be in several villages when these candidates made their appearance. On the whole, they drew small crowds, and even those who had decided to vote for them did not bother to go take a look at their chosen man. If this office seeker is to be "used" later on, one would think that here would be an excellent opportunity for the villager to establish the personal contact he might later exploit. But the peasant does not think this far ahead and, furthermore, probably assumes that the need for the politician's help might not arise.

When I listened to the peasants criticize their politicians, even those for whom they had voted and still supported, I realized that a foreigner might be tempted to read too much disapproval in comments which were made primarily to build up the ego of the critic. For, when I turned to such a critic after he had devastatingly, in his opinion, torn some program or political position to shreds, and asked "what do you suggest that the political leaders do instead?", the only reply given was: "I don't know because I'm not a politician."

I was also interested to note that there was relatively little disruptive political factionalism in a Greek village. Forty percent of the people may tend to support one party or leader, and they are not apt to switch to back

5:Hammond M-5 (1948-1950)1956
EH1 Greece EH1

good People . . . for the encouraging and encreasing of their Devotion, and for the better management of their Lives and Conversations". The foundation of the School of the Logos constitutes an important landmark; it inaugurates the era of the voluntary movements and establishes the essential features of a pattern of missionary activity which has held the field until our own day, and from which the foundation of an official Home Mission marks the first radical departure.

In September, 1876, Makrakes and his associates founded the School of the Logos which combined the functions of a private *gymnasium* with those of an evening school for adults. Father Eusebius (who had been ordained priest a month before) was appointed chaplain and *pneumatikos* of this remarkable institution—he also made himself responsible for the cleaning of the school (especially, it is related, "of its vilest places", *τῶν εὐτελεστέρων τόπων αὐτῆς*: a phrase charged with sinister meaning for anyone acquainted with the lamentable decline in the standards of Hellenic plumbing since the far-off days when King Minos flourished in his Cretan palace!) The outstanding qualities of this young priest were quickly discerned by those about him, and not a few who were many years his senior in age and experience came to rely upon him as counsellor and spiritual father. It was during this period that Father Eusebius began his experiments with the small groups (*omades*) which were to become so important a feature of the brotherhood which he founded some thirty years later.

But the School of the Logos was not destined to enjoy a long career. Scarcely two years had elapsed from its foundation when Makrakes and his associates became involved in a violent controversy with the authorities, which brought their educational and spiritual work in Athens to an abrupt conclusion and scattered the leaders of the movement to remote islands and monasteries. In 1875, as the result of a scandalous transaction involving payments to certain ministers of the State, three men succeeded in obtaining the vacant bishoprics of Patras, Messenia and Kephallenia. The facts became widely known and public opinion was deeply aroused. Makrakes and certain of his fellow-workers published fiery articles denouncing this flagrant violation of the holy canons. A trial ensued; the guilty ministers were imprisoned and fined, while the three simoniacal bishops were committed to the Holy Synod, which should then, according to the canons, have proceeded to a sentence of deposition.

The Synod, however, declined to take this step. Makrakes thereupon

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
EH1 Greece EH1

American economist of the aid mission had in mind when he declared that nothing had changed in the civil service.

In dealing with the public, Greek civil servants often gave a most unfavorable impression. Aside from the airs they assumed as representatives of authority and power, they frequently seemed not in the least concerned to help an individual solve a problem or attain something to which he was legally entitled. Instead, petty details of paper work – making application with all the correct verbiage on sheets of paper of the right size for easy filing, and so on – these were what seemed to matter; and I felt, more than once, that when an official found some flaw in the papers submitted to him, he took a certain pleasure in rejecting them and ordering the applicant to return some other time with the red tape properly tinted.

Correctness in details of this sort did, of course, assist in making clerical routine easy, but this was not, I feel sure, the compelling motive. Rather, insistence upon jots and tittles protected a subordinate from criticism by his superior, and at the same time gave him a satisfying sense of his own power as against the public.

On the other hand, when an important man – that is, someone with connections higher up – came along, he claimed and received very special treatment. He was privileged to follow his papers into the inner sanctums of senior officials, thus making sure that prompt action was taken on them. Obstacles were smoothed over and procedural rules were sometimes suspended for a man with influential friends. Foreigners often, though not always, were given the same sort of red-carpet treatment, and were accorded privileges and deference withheld from ordinary Greeks.

When a private person had business with a government agency, he would first try to find someone who knew someone

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
EH1 Greece EH1

647 in the office concerned, in order to open a door for prompt and
662 courteous service by means of private communication. As a result, a comparatively small number of persons whose social position or family connections gave them an inside track enjoyed a great advantage in dealings with officialdom, while the poor and friendless could hardly regard the government machine as anything but an obstacle between themselves and their legal rights.

647 The idea that officials should be public servants rather than
661 public masters has never been firmly rooted in modern Greece. Byzantine and Turkish tradition, transformed according to Bavarian and then German models, shaped the civil service; and the fact that educated persons regard themselves as elevated far above their ignorant fellows has reinforced and perpetuated the old dichotomy between official and subject.

647 It must be said that the fault has not lain entirely with the
661 civil servants. The ordinary private citizen in Greece is prone
662 to look upon the government as his natural enemy – a group of men who are out to tax him and interfere with what he wants to do. It follows that almost any device to foil the agents of the government is considered legitimate – deceit, lying, bribery or just the exertion of "influence." Indeed, almost all Greeks entertain a kind of admiration for a man who is clever or bold or lucky enough to get around the law and the bureaucracy. Sense of duty to public authorities and laws has never been very strong in the country. More than most nations, the Greeks remain anarchists and individualists at heart; and rather high-handed methods, together with rigid punctiliousness in matters of red tape, is a natural and perhaps almost inevitable official response to such public attitudes.

647 A few segments of the bureaucracy, however, were making
663 serious efforts to serve the public. The most conspicuous of
177 these were the agricultural extension agents, whose contacts
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6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
EH1 Greece EH1

665 magnetism of his personality, was able to control his followers and keep them faithful to him. Eleftherios Venizelos was able to exert such leadership during parts of his career, though even he was not always successful. General Papagos achieved something similar during the first year or so when he held office, before his failing health raised the question of the succession and induced his followers to start jockeying for position.

645 When no single commanding figure was able to dominate the
662 political scene – and this was normal – then political life became a complicated intrigue among ambitious individuals. Every cabinet spent a lot of energy smoothing over personal frictions within its own ranks, and attempting to block schemes, originating from the outside, to disrupt its following in the Chamber of Deputies. In many instances, these preoccupations
[433] prevented the cabinet from paying more than casual attention
[663] to the really important issues confronting Greece: questions of economic policy, in particular, were often neglected, and awkward decisions, bound to disappoint powerful individuals, were sometimes put off indefinitely.

665 The introduction of the majority system of election in 1952
666 was conceived, both by its Greek advocates and by the United
645 States Embassy, as a promising remedy for this situation. The
[177] effect of the new electoral law was to compel separate personal parties to form election coalitions, since without a coalition no party could hope for a majority if any two others joined forces. But the coalitions did not really destroy the personal parties. Instead, the leaders forming a coalition bargained together to decide how many personal supporters each would be allowed to insert in the coalition's slate of candidates. Questions of the apportionment of cabinet positions and other honorific appointments, to be awarded in the event of victory, were also explored if not always settled in advance. To be sure, Papagos resisted this process and made few promises to the politicians who

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
EH1 Greece EH1

joined his Rally; yet even he, when it came to appointing his cabinet, rewarded the most conspicuous leaders of personal parties who had merged their following into his, by appointing them to ministerial positions.

By 1956, when the commanding personality of General Papagos had been removed from the scene, the actual differences made by the new electoral law were a good deal less marked than might at first appear. Under the old proportional electoral system, the critical negotiations to form a cabinet occurred after the elections; under the new majority system very similar negotiations preceded the elections. In either case, personal followings gathered around a specially conspicuous individual were the basic elements from which cabinets and coalitions were built. Even these building blocks of the political edifice were not very firm; a leader might find, almost overnight, that "his" followers had gone off after someone else who seemed to promise something new or different.

How a man became a party leader was hard to say. Very diverse personalities were active in Greek politics, and some party leaders seemed, at least from the outside, to have little personal impressiveness. Inheritance was a factor in some cases. Sophocles Venizelos, for example, had made his political career on the strength of his father's name, and on little else. Men who lacked such an advantage normally established leadership by oratory in the Chamber of Deputies and through newspaper publicity.

As the game of politics was played, the opposition regularly enjoyed certain advantages. This implied a degree of instability for any government. First of all, in any distribution of ministerial seats and other plums of office, more contenders were bound to be left out than could possibly be included. Efforts to solve this difficulty by enlarging the size of the cabinet have been made from time to time, but always at the cost of effi-

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
EH1 Greece EH1

665 ciency, since the more voices that have to reach agreement
645 upon any policy, the more difficult it is to decide anything.
662 Hence the size of Greek cabinets has fluctuated very markedly since World War II, from over twenty-five to less than fifteen members. But even when a cabinet was made unwieldy by the effort to include as many potential supporters as possible, there were always more disappointed than successful candidates; and to such discontented persons it was a standing temptation to break party lines and vote the government down in the Chamber of Deputies on any convenient issue. In the ensuing cabinet reshuffle they might always hope to do better, having proved their indispensability to the government by unseating it.

665 Second, the opposition was always in the position of being
666 able to criticize without suggesting specific and practicable alternatives. It was easy to denounce half measures, to attack policies limited by the availability of money or of physical resources, to criticize the gaps between promises and actual achievements. The fact that much of what was thus attacked could not have been done much differently by anyone in power made little difference, since the opposition was not seriously concerned with what could or could not be done. Most politicians out of office were inclined to feel that any stick with which to beat the government, even a rotten one, was better than silence, so long as the stick hurt.

[663] The irrelevance of much of the language of political debate to the real, underlying problems of Greek society was easy to criticize from the outside. Yet a sober technical discussion of what the government could and should accomplish, of relative priority among the many desirable projects, and of long-range policies calculated to relieve overpopulation and underemployment lacked all political appeal.

471 The difficulty was that Greece faced a formidable political-
457 psychological problem. If large-scale investment on the basis
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6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
EH1 Greece EH1

bring about the overthrow of the Karamanlis government and the installation of a cabinet far less inclined to cleave to the western alliance system of NATO in foreign affairs, and far less amenable to American advice concerning home policy.

What the effect of such a change might be upon the development of the economy, or upon the civil servants who were so busily planning its growth, cannot be forecast. My point merely is this: that the divorce between the realm of political discourse in Greece and the real problems of economic and social melioration within the nation is so wide as to be dangerous. Some economically ruinous action, rising from feelings of outraged nationalism, and provoked by politicians who hope to win place and prestige by risking everything on a politico-military gamble, may damage much of what has already been accomplished, or postpone indefinitely the realization of plans which have been laid for future economic expansion.

There are here the makings of a vicious circle. The major cause of the characteristic irresponsibility and extremism of Greek politics in recent decades, I am convinced, has been the chronic discontents and personal frustrations which tens of thousands of white-collar and professional people have felt. For them, politics offers a psychological release from daily difficulty and disappointment. To act as an adequate catharsis, political argument must be exciting, indeed inflammatory. The politicians therefore offer excitement, and when they cannot find it they try to manufacture it. If no internal foe seems sufficiently evil, then attacks are turned against some foreign antagonist. Political instability and changeability are the result, and when words boil over into actions real economic setbacks often follow – setbacks that feed the chronic discontent behind the political manifestations themselves.

Much of the domestic history of modern Greece can be interpreted as the result of such a vicious circle in action. The re-

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
EH1 Greece EH1

433 construction of the economy and the transformation of the civil
662 service since 1947 seem to offer a chance for escape from this
663 circle, but escape is as yet by no means assured.

The Communist Problem

668 The Communist party was declared illegal in October 1947,
669 and has remained illegal since then. Communist party leaders first joined the guerrillas, then retreated with the remnant of the guerrilla army behind the iron curtain. It seems entirely likely that the exile leadership was torn by faction and recrimination. Backwash from the shipwreck of their hopes on the Macedonian issue in 1949 must have continued to distract the secret councils of the party. Equally, the changing winds of doctrine that followed Stalin's death shook the Greek Communist party, and, combined perhaps with other factors, led in the fall of 1956 to the demotion of Nicholas Zachariades and the substitution of an almost unknown personality as Secretary General.

Rather strenuous police measures were taken during the guerrilla war to break up the Communist underground organization. Many people were arrested and several hundred were shot. How effective these measures were in breaking down the party organization cannot be judged by anyone standing outside the inmost party circles. Furthermore, the failure of the guerrilla enterprise, and the collision between Greek national feeling and international Communist policy over the question of the future of Macedonia must have disheartened even the most fanatical Communists in Greece, and certainly discredited Communism in the eyes of many who had formerly been sympathetic.

668 Whether these events mean that the Communist threat to Greece is lastingly removed, or whether the Greek Communist